



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



CROW BRIDGE DEDICATED

Tuesday veterans, family members, and community leaders gathered in Bison to dedicate the Private David and Dale Crow bridge. The HWY 73 Bridge near Summer-ville will now be the PVT Dale and PVT David Crow Memorial Bridge.

Dale distinguished himself on September 6, 1950, while participating in an attack on a strongly defended enemy position located on Hill 285, near Sibi-ri, Korea. During the assault, Dale was seriously wounded; a comrade was dressing his wound when an enemy grenade fell close to them. Dale threw his body over that of his comrade, thereby receiving the full blast of the grenade which took his life.

David was killed instantly by enemy small arms fire on September 6, 1950, while his unit was waging a bitter fight on Hill 285 against an offensive by numerically superior hostile forces. He too made a gallant stand and died a soldier's death.

"It is our sacred duty to keep their legacies fresh in the memories of future generations; for their service is the cornerstone of our great nation," said Greg Whitlock, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

Guest speakers for the dedication were: Lt. Governor Larry Rhoden, Major General Jeffrey Marlette, adjutant general of the SDNG, American Legion Post 255 Commander Eric Kahler, SDDVA Field Service Officer Kevin Swanson and family members.

The dedication is part of a Fallen Heroes Program led by the South Dakota Departments of Veterans Affairs, Military, and Transportation.

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MEMORIAL DAY AT THE SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS CEMETERY

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs held a ribbon cutting and Memorial Day ceremony at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls on Memorial Day. This is the first state-owned cemetery in South Dakota.

The cemetery will serve as a shrine dedicated to the memories of the men and women to whom we all owe a great debt. South Dakota has been blessed with an abundance of such men and women—whose collective courage and commitment allow us to flourish as a nation and as a people united.



"The South Dakota Veterans Cemetery is an extraordinary place of honor for those who have served in our Armed Forces," said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "Behind every headstone will be a story, a story of what it meant to be a soldier, sailor, airman, marine, or coast guardsman at a particular moment in time."

The 60-acre cemetery is expected to serve a population of over 28,000 veterans, their spouses and eligible children. The first-phase of the cemetery will accommodate 610 pre-placed crypts, 999 cremains gravesites, 660 columbarium niches, and 50 memorial wall markers.



Speakers for the program included U.S. Congressman Dusty Johnson, Lt. Governor Larry Rhoden, SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock, SDDVA Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard, Cemetery Director Erin Brown, SD Veterans Council President Terry Paulsen, and Andrew Motzko from Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

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STATE CEMETERY (CONTINUED)

Highlights of the ceremony included a flyover by the 114th Fighter Wing of the South Dakota Air National Guard and musical numbers performed by the American Legion Singers and the El Riad Shrine Fife and Drum Corps.

“Our first celebration of Memorial Day at the cemetery was the perfect bookend to the cemetery establishment and construction,” said SDDVA Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard. “Now, we get to do what we’ve been planning for all this time. Veterans of all eras, and their eligible loved ones will call this cemetery their forever home. What this means is not lost on me nor the team that works tirelessly at the cemetery.”



Photos courtesy of Tracy Pollard Photography

NATIONAL GUARD TO HOST 37TH ANNUAL GOLDEN COYOTE TRAINING EXERCISE

The South Dakota National Guard will host its 37th annual Golden Coyote training exercise in the Black Hills June 12–26 to provide military units with relevant training opportunities in support of overseas contingency operations and homeland defense.

Created in 1984 with the cooperation of the National Forest Service and Custer State Park, this year's exercise will allow over 2,000 service members to conduct combat-support and service-support missions in a realistic training environment.

There will be 35 military units from nine states and a U.S. territory participating in the exercise from the National Guard, Army Reserve, and Navy Reserve. Participating units will conduct military operations throughout the region, train on unit missions, employ their equipment, and complete humanitarian and engineer projects.

This year's exercise includes engineer, medical, logistics, aviation, transportation, maintenance, public affairs units, and offers units opportunities to train on individual and collective tasks and battle drills, combat patrols, urban combat operations, medical first aid, casualty evacuation, and convoy operations.

Several units will complete humanitarian missions to transport timber to Native American communities, as well as engineer projects to improve forest infrastructure, trails, and roads.

Residents should be aware of an increase in military traffic throughout the region and in the communities of Rapid City, Hill City, and Custer and can expect an increase in noise levels due to military training. Aircraft will be operating throughout the area and will respond to real-world emergencies during the exercise and remain in an all-hours-ready status.

The public is asked to remain at a safe distance from all moving military vehicles and aircraft to prevent injury to personnel or damage to property.



SDNG RIBBON CUTTING FOR ARMY AVIATION READINESS CENTER

A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for the South Dakota National Guard's new Army Aviation Readiness Center on Friday, June 11, at 1 pm (MT). The Center is located at 4750 Guard Road, near Rapid City Regional Airport.

The public is encouraged to attend the event.

The \$20 million, 57,000 square-foot building features training classrooms, administrative offices, equipment and supply storage, and a vehicle maintenance bay. The new facility will house over 150 soldiers from eight aviation units and will enhance unit training and readiness requirements for decades to come.

Planned speakers for the ceremony include Gov. Kristi Noem, Congressman Dusty Johnson, and Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general.

The readiness center is designed to meet LEED Silver criteria – making the building energy efficient and environmentally friendly. The building also includes a geothermal heat exchanger for heating and cooling, automated temperature control monitor, anti-terrorism/force protection measures, security fencing, and site lighting.



STATEMENT BY VA SECRETARY MCDONOUGH ON PRESIDENT'S FY 2022 BUDGET

The Biden-Harris administration submitted to Congress the president's budget for fiscal year 2022. As the administration continues to make progress defeating the pandemic and getting our economy back on track, the budget makes historic investments that will help the country build back better and lay the foundation for shared growth and prosperity for decades to come.

This bold budget request by President Biden to Congress will ensure the VA is moving swiftly and smartly into the future, with much-needed monetary investments in our most successful and vital programs. To fulfill the VA's sacred promise to care for our nation's veterans, families, caregivers, and survivors, we must return the investment veterans have made in America through their service.

The budget includes the two historic plans the president has already put forward — the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan — and reinvests in education, research, public health and other foundations of our country's strength.

The total 2022 request for the VA is \$269.9 billion (with medical care collections), a 10% increase above 2021. This includes a discretionary budget request of \$117.2 billion (with medical care collections), a 9% increase above 2021. The 2022 mandatory funding request totals \$152.7 billion, an increase of \$14.9 billion or 10.8% above 2021. The VA's 2022 request is in addition to the substantial resources provided in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Additionally, the President's FY 2022 budget includes \$18 billion as part of the American Jobs Plan to address VA health care infrastructure needs in the short- and long-term, together with \$260 million for the American Families Plan to support the administration's commitment to provide supplementary support to veterans who are parents, in order to offer a holistic, family-friendly approach to care.

At the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the \$117.2 billion discretionary request would:

- **Work to eliminate veteran homelessness and prevent veteran suicide.** The budget includes \$2.2 billion in discretionary appropriations for veteran homelessness programs, to include \$486 million in American Rescue Plan funding. This will support expanded case management services to help more veterans gain permanent housing through housing vouchers and prevent homelessness among low-income veteran families. Additionally, the budget includes \$598 million for veteran suicide prevention outreach programs that address the risks for suicide, with the goal of intervening before a veteran reaches a point of crisis. The VA will also support the new Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program.
- **Help our veterans build civilian lives of opportunity with the education and jobs worthy of their skills and talents.** The budget supports the president's commitment to help veterans with education and job training by making key investments in the Veterans Benefits Administration. This includes an increase of \$81.5 million for the Digital GI Bill Modernization Effort to better serve veterans who are using their GI Bill benefits. Funding also increases by \$5 million for Veterans' Clean Energy Job Training in conjunction with the United States Department of Labor, and by \$3.6 million for the VA Disability Employment Pilot Project to assist eligible veterans with service-connected disabilities seeking employment opportunities.

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VA FY2022 BUDGET (CONTINUED)

- **Ensure VA welcomes all veterans, and diversity, equity and inclusion are woven into the fabric of the Department.** The Department is making a strong commitment to ensuring the VA welcomes all our veterans, to include women, those of color and whom are LGBTQ+. To support that commitment, the VA has created a new Office of Resolution Management, Diversity, and Inclusion which will benefit from an increase of \$12.9 million to strengthen the VA's diversity program.
- **Keep faith with our families and caregivers.** The budget provides approximately \$1.4 billion, an increase of \$350 million for the Caregiver Support Program. Through this program the Veterans Health Administration provides support to individuals who act as caregivers for veterans. The 2022 budget supports the phased expansion of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to include all eligible veterans, no matter when they served.

Enacting the budget policies into law this year would strengthen our nation's economy and lay the foundation for shared prosperity, while also improving our nation's long-term fiscal health. For more information on the President's FY 2022 Budget visit: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>.

DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY SCHEDULED FOR RAPID CITY NATIONAL GUARD UNIT

A deployment ceremony is scheduled for seven soldiers with the South Dakota Army National Guard's Detachment 5, Company C, 2-641st Aviation Regiment on Friday, June 11, at 11:30 a.m. at the Army Aviation Readiness Center, near Rapid City Regional Airport.

The public is encouraged to attend the event as the troops depart for a nine-month deployment to Djibouti.

The unit will deploy in support of Combined Joint Task Force –Horn of Africa to provide aviation support in the region. The 2/641st is a fixed-wing aviation unit comprised of pilots and operations specialists which operate the C-12 King Air.

Planned speakers for the ceremony include Gov. Kristi Noem, Congressman Dusty Johnson, and Maj. Gen. Jeff Marlette, SDNG adjutant general.

The soldiers will report to Fort Bliss, Texas, to complete theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas.



VA SCHEDULES STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS TO GUIDE FUTURE OF VA HEALTH CARE

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs continues this June to seek feedback from veterans and communities to help shape the future of VA health care policy.

The VA has been hosting public virtual listening sessions across the country since March to hear from veterans on their thoughts about how to improve the care they receive from the VA.

The goal is to design a [health care system of the future](#) and grow services available to veterans, reinforcing the VA's role as a leader in the U.S. health care system.

"Hearing the voices of veterans throughout this process is integral to designing a health care system that will best serve them now and, in the future," said Acting VA Under Secretary for Health Richard Stone, M.D. "We appreciate the veterans and stakeholders who have taken the time to attend a listening session to provide feedback and we encourage others to attend future sessions to share their perspective."

The schedule for upcoming listening sessions is as follows: Spanish session

June 2—6 pm (ET)

Evening session (in varying time zones):

June 14—7 pm (ET)

June 14—8 pm (PT)

June 15—6:30 pm (CT)

June 17—5 pm (MT)

Feedback from the listening sessions will be used to develop the recommendations that the VA will submit to the [Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission](#) in January 2022. The AIR

Commission is responsible for developing recommendations for the president and Congress on how to modernize VA care and realign VA facilities across the country. The commission will also conduct public hearings as part of their review of VA's recommendations before submitting its recommendations for review and approval in 2023.



SHIOWX FALLS AMERICAN LEGION AND VFW TO HOST FALLEN SOLDIERS TRIBUTE

For the first time ever, the Sioux Falls American Legion Post #15 and VFW Post #628 will be hosting a Tribute to Fallen Soldiers event on Saturday, July 17, at the Military Heritage Alliance in Sioux Falls

"Tribute to Fallen Soldiers" is a group of passionate, dedicated, and caring individuals who ride their motorcycles across America to honor and pay tribute to America's fallen service members. Each summer, riders across the United States are invited to gather in Eugene, Oregon to participate in an annual Tribute to Fallen Soldiers Memorial Torch motorcycle ride, ending at the Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D.C.

The stop in Sioux Falls will honor four fallen service members and their families:

Air Force SRA Karlie Westall

Army Staff Sergeant Robb Roling

Army 1st Lieutenant Thomas Martin

Army Sergeant Wayne Cornell

"As our ride procession makes its way across the country we make scheduled stops to honor these fallen heroes. At each visit we make, we present the surviving family members with our 'Memorial Plaque of Distinguished Service' to simply say thank you to each family member and to remind them their fallen service member has not been forgotten, and will never be forgotten," said Warren Williamson, executive director, Tribute to Fallen Soldiers. "As everyday Americans, we graciously extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Gold Star families in the Sioux Falls area."

Doors to The Alliance open at 5 pm (CT) on July 17. Tribute to Fallen Soldiers riders arrive at 6:45 pm (CT) along with any riders that have joined them across the state. There will be a transfer of a "Memorial Flame" to the American Legion Honor Guard in The Alliance parking lot before a dinner and a program. The Honor Guard will return the "Memorial Flame" to Tribute to Fallen Soldiers on Sunday morning at 8:20 am (CT) prior to their departure. This ceremony will take place at the flagpole of the post at 1700 West Russell.

The public is invited to attend the dinner, program and the memorial flame ceremonies. Businesses or organizations interested in participating in the dinner and program can purchase tables for \$300. Individual tickets are also available for \$30. Those interested in attending can call or stop by the American Legion office.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to honor and pay tribute to four fallen soldiers in the area," said Joan Ishol, event chairperson. "We are grateful to the Tribute to Fallen Soldiers participants for committing their time to honor the men and women that so proudly served our country."

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier 1921 - 2021

Commemorate this 100th Anniversary

Sat. & Sun. July 24-25

Sioux Falls, SD

FREE Admission
Open to the Public
**** 9am - 5pm ****

The SD Military Heritage Alliance
1600 W. Russell St. 57104



“A CALL TO HONOR: THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER REPLICA”



View the half-scale replica, ask questions & discuss the history of the “Unknowns” & the Tomb Guards who protect them.

Enjoy Musical Performances & Guest Speakers throughout the day.

Sioux Falls Municipal Band in concert - 3pm on Sunday

The Patriot Grill & Club Lobo available for food/beverage purchases.



Honor our Military & Veterans.
Celebrate this Historic Anniversary.
Join us for this patriotic, once-in-a-lifetime, historical event.

This is an **INDOOR** event
so plan to bring your family no matter the weather!



WE WILL NEVER FORGET

While you're here, visit the “Never Forget” Garden at the Sioux Falls Veteran's Memorial Park.

A lasting tribute created by Mary Chilton Chapter, NSDAR & the Sioux Falls Park & Rec. Dept.



Fallen Soldiers are not gone as long as we remember them.

Support the

Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser
Saturday evening, July 24 \$30

6:30 pm Social 7:00 pm Buffet Dinner

Featuring the music of AG Jamboree & programs by “A Call to Honor” & Midwest Honor Flight. *Note: The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Replica will remain open to ticketholders. Tickets are available at SouthDakotaAlliance.org (choose “buy tickets” in the upper left corner)*

Sponsored by the Mary Chilton Chapter, NSDAR, in cooperation with the South Dakota Society Daughters of the American Revolution, the SD Military Heritage Alliance & the Mary Chilton Foundation

HONOR FLIGHT DINNER AT THE ALLIANCE

CELEBRATING
THE 100TH
ANNIVERSARY OF
THE TOMB OF THE
UNKNOWN SOLDIER

**JUL
24
2021**

6:30 PM
DOORS OPEN

7:00 PM
MEAL AND
PROGRAM BEGIN

FEATURING A.G. JAMBOREE

SEE THE HALF SCALE TOMB REPLICA



\$30

TICKETED ADMISSION IS
REQUIRED AND INCLUDES A
TWO-MEAT DINNER BUFFET,
SILENT AUCTION, AND LIVE
ENTERTAINMENT PROVIDED
BY A.G. JAMBOREE

DINNER, REPLICA, & ENTERTAINMENT AT:
SOUTH DAKOTA MILITARY HERITAGE ALLIANCE
1600 W RUSSELL ST, SIOUX FALLS, SD 57104

**PURCHASE TICKETS AT
SOUTHDAKOTAALLIANCE.ORG**



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**MIDWEST
HONOR FLIGHT**

the ALLIANCE
South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance, Inc.



Mary Chilton Chapter NSDAR
Sioux Falls, South Dakota



EXCHANGE
EXCHANGE CLUB OF ROME, GA

A.G. JAMBOREE

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

New Opportunity to Participate

Virtual Listening Session on the Future of VA Health Care

When: June 15, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. (CDT)

Who: Veterans, Veterans Service Organization representatives, and other community stakeholders – if you have not already attended a local listening session

Where: The listening session will be conducted virtually – you can join via phone or computer.

Dial 404-397-1596 (Access Code: 199 394 7544) to join.

We are looking forward to hearing from Veterans on the following topics:

- How Veterans want care to be delivered in the future
- Perception of the quality of health care at VA and VA's community network
- Experience with the ability to get care at VA and within VA's community network
- Satisfaction with the condition and location of VA's facilities
- VA's role in research, education, and emergency preparedness

VA is hosting public virtual listening sessions to hear from Veterans on how to design a health care system of the future and grow services for Veterans in a way that reinforces VA's role as a leader in the U.S. health care system. This listening session represents an exciting opportunity for Veterans to help VA reimagine how VA delivers care in an equitable, high quality, Veteran-centered manner and develop a plan for investing in VA's aging infrastructure.



We encourage Veterans, Veterans Service Organizations, Community Veterans Engagement Boards, and other interested stakeholders to attend. The feedback will be used to develop the recommendations VA submits to the Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission in January 2022.

If you are not able to attend but would still like to provide feedback, please submit your feedback to VHAMAQs@va.gov.



Please do not include personal health information and be aware that VA will not be providing responses to individual emails.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jun 11—VABHHCS Pine Ridge Stand Down and Enrollment Fair—Pine Ridge Pow Wow Grounds—10:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)

Jun 11—SDNG Deployment Ceremony—Army Aviation Readiness Center (4750 Guard Road)—Rapid City—11:30 am (MT)

Jun 11—SDNG Ribbon Cutting Aviation Readiness Center (4750 Guard Road)—Rapid City—1:00 pm (MT)

Jun 12-26—SDNG Golden Coyote Training

Jun 13—Midwest Honor Flight Honor Ride—Begins at Military Heritage Alliance(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—Registration 12:30 pm (CT) and ride begins at 2:30 pm (CT)

Jun 17-20—VFW 91st State Convention—Kelly Inn (1607 E. HWY 50)—Yankton

Jun 24-27—American Legion State Convention—Crossroads (100 4th ST SW)—Huron

Jul 17—Tribute to Fallen Soldiers—Military Heritage Alliance Building (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—Doors open at 5:00 pm (CT)—Social—6:30 pm (CT) and Dinner—7:00 pm (CT)

Jul 21—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—Military Heritage Alliance Building—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)

Jul 24—Tomb of the Unknown Soldier 100th Anniversary Commemoration—Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street) —Sioux Falls

Aug 16-18—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre

Aug 23—Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser at Barrel House (4701 E. 54th Street)—Sioux Falls

Oct 23—Midwest Honor Flight Hangar Dance at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls

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